

1 CORINTHIANS 2 | *Wisdom Among the Mature*

1. Wisdom among the Mature (1 Co 2:6-13).

- a. **1 Co 2:6-13** 6 Yet among the mature (τέλειος) we do speak (λαλέω, pres.) wisdom (σοφία), although it is not a wisdom of this age (αἰών) or of the rulers of this age (τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος), who are doomed to pass away. 7 But we speak (λαλέω, pres.) a secret (μυστηρίω) and hidden (ἀποκρύπτω, perf. pass.) wisdom of God, which God decreed (προορίζω, aor.) before the ages (πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων) for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age have understood (γινώσκω, perf.) this, for if they had, they would not have crucified (σταυρόω, aor.) the Lord of glory (τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης). 9 But as it is written, What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him— 10 these things God has revealed (ἀποκαλύπτω, aor.) to us through the Spirit/spirit (διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος). For the Spirit/spirit searches (ἐραυνάω, pres.) everything, even the depths (βάθος) of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit (πνεῦμα) of that person, which is in him? So also no one has understood (γινώσκω, perf.) the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου), but the Spirit/spirit who is from God (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ), in order that we might know (οἶδα) the things that were freely given (χαρίζομαι, aor. pass.) to us by God. 13 And we speak (λαλέω, pres.) this not in words taught by human wisdom (οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις) but taught by the Spirit (ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος), interpreting (συγκρίνω, pres.) to those who are spiritual things (πνευματικαῖς πνευματικὰ).
- b. Paul and the other apostles speak wisdom among the mature (v. 6a).
- (a) The gospel message is simple, but Christian theology is deep.
 - (b) The mature person is distinguishable from the “infant in Messiah” (1 Co 3:1).
- (2) It is not a wisdom of this age (αἰών) or of the rulers of this age (τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος)(v. 6b).
- (a) The wisdom of this age includes all non-biblical worldviews.
 - (b) The rulers of this age are doomed to pass away (v. 6c).
 - 1) The rulers of this age include political, economic, social, cultural, business, educational, and religious leaders, both known and unknown. They dominate public opinion and set the standard for what the majority believes to be true.
 - 2) The popular perception of what is true changes over time, but Christian doctrine is always true.
- (3) It is a secret (μυστηρίω) and hidden (ἀποκρύπτω) wisdom of God (v. 7a).
- (4) God decreed (προορίζω, aor.) it before the ages (πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων) for the glory of believers (v. 7b).
- (a) God predetermined in eternity past what Christian theology and doctrine would be.
 - (b) Christian theology is our glory.
- (5) None of the rulers of this age have understood this wisdom (v. 8a).
- (a) If they had, they would not have crucified Jesus, the Lord of glory(v. 8b).
 - 1) Their actions demonstrated their ignorance of God's wisdom.

- a) **Lk 23:34** 34 And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.
- (6) The wisdom concerns unseen, unheard of, unimagined things God has prepared for those who love him (v. 9).
- (a) Paul quotes:
- 1) **Is 64:4** 4 From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.
 - 2) **Is 65:17** 17 For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.
- (b) General revelation does not reveal these things. Only special revelation does.
- c. God has revealed (ἀποκαλύπτω, aor.) this wisdom to us through the Spirit (διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος) (v. 10a).
- (a) God's wisdom is for every believer.
- (2) The Spirit searches (ἐραυνάω, pres.) everything, even the depths (βάθος) of God (v. 10b).
- (a) No one knows a person's thoughts except the spirit (πνεῦμα) of that person (v. 11a).
- (b) Likewise, no one has understood (γινώσκω, perf.) the things of God except the Spirit of God (v. 11b).
- (3) We have received the Spirit from God, not the spirit of the world (v. 12a).
- (a) Every believer has received the Spirit.
- 1) **1 Co 12:13** 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.
 - (b) The spirit of the world is the attitude/mindset/viewpoint of the world.
- (4) The purpose is that we might know the things that *were* freely given (χαρίζομαι) to us by God (v. 12b).
- (a) God freely gave us his Spirit in order that we may know everything else he has freely given us.
- (5) The apostles speak this wisdom not in words taught by human wisdom, but words taught by the Spirit (v. 13a).
- (a) The Spirit enables the perception and communication of divine truth. This enablement is essential and indispensable.
- (6) The apostles interpret spiritual things to those who are spiritual (πνευματικοῖς πνευματικῶς) (v. 13b).

2. Spiritual Discernment (1 Co 2:14-16).

- a. **1 Co 2:14-16** 14 Now a soulish person (ψυχικός...ἄνθρωπος) does not accept (δέχομαι, pres.) the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly (μωρία) to him, and he is not able to understand (γινώσκω, aor.) them because they are spiritually discerned (πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται). 15 The spiritual person (ὁ...πνευματικὸς) judges (ἀνακρίνω, pres.) all things, but is himself to be judged (ἀνακρίνω, pres. pass.) by no one. 16 For who has understood (γινώσκω, pres.) the mind (νοῦς) of the Lord so as to instruct (συμβιβάζω, fut.) him? But we [believers] have the mind of Messiah (νοῦν Ἰησοῦ).
- b. The natural person does not accept the things of God's Spirit (v. 14a).
 - (1) They are foolishness to him (v. 14b).
 - (2) He is unable to understand them because they are spiritually examined (v. 14c).
 - (a) The natural person is the unbeliever who does not possess the Spirit.
 - (b) Every person is natural until he or she trusts in Jesus and receives the Spirit.
 - (c) The natural person's ideas and viewpoints are exclusively natural.
 - (d) A natural person can understand the words of Scripture, but not accept it or recognise, or adequately interpret its significance apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
 - (e) **Mk 4:33** 33 With many such parables [Jesus] spoke the word to [the large crowd], as they were able to hear it. 34 He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.
- c. The spiritual person:
 - (a) The spiritual person is the believer who both possesses the Spirit and is actively living by the Spirit.
 - (2) Examines all things (v. 15a).
 - (3) Is examined by no one (except God) (v. 15b).
- d. No one on his own is able to understand the mind of God or instruct him (v. 16a).
 - (1) **Is 40:13** 13 Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord, or what man shows him his counsel?
- e. And yet, through the Spirit, we have access to the mind of Messiah (v. 16b).
 - (1) The mind of Jesus is the attitude, mindset, outlook, viewpoint, worldview of Jesus.
 - (2) Mature believers, who are habitually spiritual, understand the mind of Jesus to a much greater degree than unbelievers, who live naturally, or immature believers, who are habitually fleshly.
 - (3) A mark of Christian maturity is the believer's consistent employment of Jesus' attitude and viewpoint in all of life.¹

3. Reflections.

- a. The basic point of tension between Paul and the Corinthians is over what it means to be wise and what it means to be spiritual.
- b. The values and worldview of believers is to be radically different from the wisdom of this age.²

¹ Thomas Constable, Notes on 1 Corinthians, 53.

² Fee, 120.